

July 18, 2007

**Statement of Congressman Pete Stark  
Supporting Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services Funding**

MR. STARK: Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of making quality education and health care available to our children. The last six years of Republican budgets created numerous human deficits -- in health care, education, child care, and social services. This bill takes America in a new direction, beginning to fill those deficits with long overdue investments in Pell Grants, Head Start, public and special education programs and community health centers.

President Bush has threatened to veto this bill because he claims it is fiscally irresponsible. Only in an absurd parallel universe, where Iraq really had weapons of mass destruction, would increasing the amount of Pell Grants so that low-income students can afford college be considered irresponsible. Only in a fictional world, where abstinence-only education actually works, could increasing funding for childcare and Head Start be irresponsible.

In the real world, these investments will generate valuable returns – for our children and our country. Passage of this bill is essential to repairing the safety net and providing our children with the world class education they need to become engaged and productive citizens.

It is critical for the future of public education that the federal government provide states with the support they need to meet the laudable, but difficult goals set by President Bush's own No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Unfortunately, the President has negligently underfunded his own law by \$50 million. This bill provides a \$2 billion increase in K-12 education funding, rejects the President's proposed cuts for special education programs for the 6.9 million students with disabilities, and expands the Child Care Block Grant by \$75 million.

Today's legislation also takes a small step toward improving our broken health care system, in which tens of millions of people are uninsured or underinsured. It expands access to health care for 1.2 million people by funding community health centers and state health access grants. This

bill also makes overdue investments in the National Institutes of Health by providing funds for 545 new research grants. Such grants fund breakthrough discoveries that can dramatically decrease suffering and disease.

I hope my colleagues recognize that this bill paves the way for a healthier, better educated, and more compassionate society and urge them to join me in voting yes.